



# Writing a Self-Statement

April 2026

# Overview

- General considerations for writing self-statements
- Section-specific tips
- Questions?

# General Considerations

## *1. Don't underestimate the importance of your self-statement*

- It is the component of your file you control at time of review
- This is where you will:
  - Provide the narrative
  - Contextualize
  - Make the case for yourself!

# General Considerations

## *2. Know your review criteria*

- Should influence what you write about, as well as how much you write about it
- Professor series: APM 210.1.d (and see MAPP 2014)
- Teaching Professor series: APM 210.3.d (and see MAPP 2054)

Note: Consult departmental promotion/advancement criteria, if available.

# General Considerations

## 2. *Know your review criteria*

- Assistant Professors:  
research/creative work > teaching > service
- Assistant Teaching Professors:  
teaching excellence > professional/scholarly achievement/activity > service

### Notes:

- Contributions to DEI are assessed within these criteria, but more on this later...
- For Teaching Professors, criteria boundaries can be fuzzy. Frame accordingly!

# General Considerations

## 3. *Know your review period*

- Merit: Two-year review period (for assistant profs & assistant teaching profs)
- Mid-career appraisal (MCA): Career\*
- Promotion to Associate: Career\*

\* With particular attention to career *at UC Merced*

# General Considerations

## *4. Keep prior feedback in mind and address concerns*

- Prior merits
- MCA
- Consultation with Chair

# General Considerations

## *5. Make it easy for the reviewers of your case*

- Be clear and organized
- Be evaluative (but not wordy)
- Be candid and transparent
- Write with two audiences in mind, experts and generalists
- Do the review committee's work for them!

# General Considerations

## *6. Candid and transparent ≠ overly modest*

Great tip from Aurora Pribram-Jones (Assoc. Prof. of Chemistry and Biochemistry):

If you know you have trouble talking about your accomplishments in ways that highlight your leadership and creativity, you can try writing a statement or pieces of one that are purposefully pompous or “braggy.” This exercise forces you to identify which parts of collaborative, creative, service, or scholarly work are most your own, most innovative, or even most thankless. Then show it to someone who is a trusted peer or advocate, and ask them where you need to tone it down. Most people who do this are surprised at how much “talking up” others will leave in, where we might balk at “taking too much credit.” You can then take snippets of this and weave them into the more nuanced writing you have about yourself already.

# General Considerations

## *7. Statement length*

- New page limits (effective 7/1/2025):

Merits – 4 pages

Career reviews – 8 pages

- Remember there will be a “bio-bib,” etc., in your materials

# Section-Specific Tips: Background

*Provide a very brief background section*

- Desired action
- Previous action(s) (including dates)
- Current rank/step

# Section-Specific Tips: Research

*Possible organization:*

- General statement about research area/approach/trajectory
- Overview of accomplishments (e.g., publications, grants, recognitions, etc.)
- Specific, select accomplishments
- Work in progress? (ties back to trajectory)

# Section-Specific Tips: Research

*Explain impact/significance:*

- Impact, prestige, selectiveness of outlets/funders (be honest!)
- Citations, media coverage, etc.
- Narrative for non-specialists

# Section-Specific Tips: Research

*Explain your contribution:*

- Coauthorship (with who, your role, etc.)
- Grants (PI, Co-PI, etc.)
- Disciplinary context regarding collaboration
- Establishing research independence is important

# Section-Specific Tips: Research

*Other stuff*

- Mind your review period!
- Make your case, but with credibility and candor

# Section-Specific Tips: Teaching

*What do you teach and how do you do it?*

- Which classes?
- Approach to teaching

# Section-Specific Tips: Teaching

*Intentionality, innovation, inclusion, and improvement*

- New courses?
- Changes to existing courses?
- Pedagogical research (Teaching Professors should include this in Research section)
- Evidence of seeking to improve teaching (e.g., CETL)
- Evidence of thoughtfulness and reflection about your teaching

# Section-Specific Tips: Teaching

## *Evidence of effectiveness*

- Quantitative student evaluations
  - Can be problematic
  - Contextualize
- Qualitative student comments
- Awards
- Peer evaluations

# Section-Specific Tips: Teaching

## *Mentoring*

- Both grad and undergrad
- Highlight the accomplishments of your students (publications, postdocs, job placements, grad program admissions, etc.)

*Caveat – Do not to reveal sensitive, private, or confidential information about named or readily identifiable individuals*

## Section-Specific Tips: Service

*Don't just list! This is an opportunity to explain contribution and accomplishments*

- Department
- Campus
- UC system
- Profession
- Public

# Contributions to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

- While *not required* under APM 210, these contributions are *valued*
- As relevant, you can discuss these contributions in your Research, Teaching, and/or Service sections; or in a separate section (not required!)
- Simply being a faculty member at a university with a diverse student body may not be viewed as a compelling contribution
- Focus on concrete *activities*, not *beliefs* or *identity*

*Caveat – Be careful not to reveal sensitive, private, or confidential information about named or readily identifiable individuals*

## Section-Specific Tips: Challenges (& Opportunities?)

- Covid impacts on research and teaching (not a request for personal/private information)
- Building/lab closures, etc.
- Unexpected grant terminations
- Scarcity of graduate mentoring/teaching opportunities
- How did you respond? Demonstration of creativity or resourcefulness?

*Caveat – Do not to reveal sensitive, private, or confidential information about named or readily identifiable individuals*



# Questions?